

Letter from Eliza Symonds Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, August 30, 1875, with transcript

Copy of Letters from Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell to her son, Alexander Graham Bell August 30th, 75 P. O. Box 518 Brantford, Ont., Can., August 30th, 75 (Prof. A. Graham Bell, 292 Essex Street, Salem, Mass. U. S.) My dear Aleck,

Your letter came to hand this morning. Before this reaches Salem you will I hope have received that of your Father and be filled with regret and compunction for the ungenerous thoughts you have entertained towards him. You cannot reach your Father except through me, for what wounds one, wounds both. I wish you had directed the letter to be burned unread. We neither of us dreamed that my letters were not looked upon as from both, and he has accordingly gone on in perfect security and ignorance of the thoughts you were harbouring against him. We might with quite as much justice conclude that you have no sympathy with us or for your home, because you never notice in your letters anything I tell you about it, or what takes place there. Yet I have continued to write in perfect faith that you did feel an interest although it was not demonstrated. I can only excuse you by thinking that your mind must be unhinged by close and prolonged application to Telegraphic work, the progress and termination of which we have been long watching and hoping for, believing your absence and silence to be caused by it alone. I acknowledge I have written but little on that incomprehensible subject (as it appears to me) and it is a chance if your Father understand it much more, but that silence was not caused by indifference. There is one point in your letter that I must remark upon, you say we do not know how near you were to death. Suppose death had come, in what state were you to meet it, with your mind teeming with bitter and vindictive thoughts? "The sorrows of the world worketh death." This is a very serious question, for the gift of God is life eternal only in one way, by cultivating the spirit 2 of God. If you were in the right state you could not be thrown so completely off the right track, for it is written "he shall be kept in perfect peace

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whose mind is stayed upon thee". You will never trust him in vain. Do not dwell upon imaginary affronts, because you will be doing more injury and injustice than you fancy you are receiving. "Think no evil, but dwell upon what you know to be true, honest, just, pure and good". The spirit of God is love, joy and peace. It is wonderful how these God-gifts cause the bubbles and trials of life to sink down. I will say nothing more of your late mistakes farther than this: In future if your Father's opinions be not exactly in accordance with your own, pause and think whether his extra years and experience may not render him the wiser and make his view worth considering. Perhaps it is your own portion of antagonism that causes the crack. When you come together at any rate I suppose you would not care to be treated as a "stranger" in your own home, and it is not likely your Father would feel sufficient interest in one to oppose him even if he thought him wrong. Hoping my dear Aleck, you will lay these things to heart, I am,

Your affectionate but very sad Mother, E. G. Bell

(Encl. with Aug. 30, 75 Tuesday Morning, August 31st, 75

We are glad that you and Mabel understand each other, and congratulate all she loves in her escape from a watery grave. I do not know if anything I have said may be read in wrong light, but if you apply the Scripture rules which I have quoted, there will be no harm done. This unexpected and I may add unmerited blow has been so terrible, that your Father and I both feel we can never be happy again. Your Father had written a note to send with this, but I have persuaded him not to do so (though you richly deserve his expressions of indignation) in the hope that you will see your error, and acknowledge it. We both feel thoroughly bewildered, and fear something must have upset your mind. We can give each other no comfort for we feel none. We can only wait in anxiety for what next may be coming.

Your affectionate Mother.